

# HISTORICAL DICTIONARY OF LIBERIA

*Second Edition*

D. ELWOOD DUNN

AMOS J. BEYAN

CARL PATRICK BURROWES

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**Dedicated to the Victims of the  
Liberian Civil War  
of 1989-1997**



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scholar. His first public position was that of general speaker of the Bopolu Chiefdom. In 1931, he was elected paramount **chief** of the Bopolu Chiefdom. In 1957, he was elected to the House of Representatives from Western Province (Lofa County). He died in **Monrovia**, on January 2, 1961.

**ZO.** A term used in central and western Liberia to refer to an individual, male or female, who is a respected elder. Often these individuals are considered to have medicinal and spiritual powers, as well.

**ZWEDRU (6°04'N, 8°08'W).** County seat of **Grand Gedeh County**. It is the largest urban center in this sparsely populated area. Sometimes incorrectly called Tchien, Zwedru has been connected to **Monrovia** by road since 1962. Some multinational logging firms operate in the vicinity of Zwedru.

## Bibliography

### Introduction

Because Liberia has been around longer than most African countries, there is a good deal of literature on the country. Much of the more useful studies tend to concentrate on the American circumstances associated with the founding of the state, and the challenge of forging a functioning polity involving repatriates and peoples indigenous to the area. On the indigenous peoples themselves the literature is scant.

The best general works are bibliographies, and they include a series by Svend Holsoe—*A Study Guide for Liberia*, and parts 1-4 of *A Bibliography on Liberia*; Robert Kappel and Werner Korte's *A Bibliography of Books and Articles on Liberia As Edited in German Speaking Countries since 1960* (1989); Elwood Dunn's *Liberia* (in the World Bibliographical Series, 1995); and Werner Korte's more recent *Liberia: A Bibliography (1988-98) with Special References to the Civil War* (1998). There are as well specialized bibliographies such as Fawoni Nguma's "Missions and Education In Liberia . . ." and Francis Ingemann's "A Bibliography of Liberian Languages."

Also important for general and specialized study of Liberia are such archival sources as the Library of Congress (the American Colonization Society papers and other Liberia collections); the Svend E. Holsoe Collection on Liberia (now at Indiana University, and perhaps the best and most extensive single collection, surpassing even the Liberian National Archives, all but destroyed during the Civil War); the William V. S. Tubman Library and Presidential Papers (at the former president's Totota estate in Liberia); and what remains of the National Archives which was cataloged in 1976 by Tom Shick ("A Catalog of the National Archives of the Liberian Government").



Regular coverage of events in Liberia can be found in *West Africa*, Colin Legum's *Africa Contemporary Record* (New York: Africana, annual), *Africa South of the Sahara* (London: Europa, annual), the *Liberian Studies Journal* (published biannually in the U.S. since 1969); and reports over the past two decades of such human rights groups as the Lawyers' Committee on Human Rights (New York), Africa Watch (a division of World Watch based in the U.S.) and Amnesty International (London).

There is virtually no integrative study of Liberian culture, though elements exist for bringing about such studies. Some such elements include Robert Brown's "A Sociolinguistic Study of Language Attitudes Among Selected Tertiary Liberian Bilinguals and Their Attained Proficiency in ESL"; S. Henry Cordor's "Toward the Study of Liberian Literature: An Anthology of Critical Essays"; Darith M. Oferi-Scheps's "On the Object of Ethnology: Apropos of Vai Culture in Liberia"; some of the novels of Bai T. Moore; and studies of languages such as the Grebo (John Auer and Francis Ingemann), the Bassa and others (David Dalby), and the Vai (Fatima Massaquoi Fahnbulleh and Paul Hair).

Studies in geology, geography and other areas of the natural sciences seem to be largely rudimentary, but a perusal of what we have compiled in this area could prove beneficial to researchers.

Important social science literature includes Edward Wilmot Blyden's seminal *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* (1887); John Walter Cason's "The Growth of Christianity in the Liberian Environment" (1962); Warren d'Azevedo's series on "A Tribal Reaction to Nationalism" (1969-71); John Gay and Michael Cole's *The New Mathematics and an Old Culture: A Study of Learning among the Kpelle of Liberia* (1967); Paul Gifford's *Christianity and Politics in Doe's Liberia* (1993); Gordon Haliburton's *The Prophet Harris* (1973); and James Hopewell's "Islam and the Forest: A Study of Muslim Penetration into French Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia before 1850" (1958). In addition to the foregoing, there are important modern beginnings in the study of some of Liberia's ethnic communities, among them Svend Holsoe (Vai); Jangaba Johnson (Vai, Grebo, Gola); Jane Martin and Ronald Kurtz (Grebo); William Siegman (Bassa); Ronald David, George Brooks and Kjell Zetterstrom (Kru); and Ruth Stone, James Gibbs and Caroline Bledsoe (Kpelle).

There is no classic work on Liberian history as such, though there are important works on certain periods of that history. Archeology and prehistory yield two articles in the *Liberian Studies Journal* by John Atherton (1969 and 70/71). For the colonial period and early state formation should be included Archibald Alexander's *A History of*

*Colonization on the Western Coast of Africa* (1846), P.J. Staudenraus's *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865* (1961), Amos Beyan's *The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State: A Historical Perspective, 1822-1900* (1991) and Zamba Liberty's "Growth of the Liberian State: An Analysis of Its Historiography" (1977). Then there are the studies on relations between the state and its majority ethnic groups, or studies of the histories of individual groups. These studies include Monday Akpan's "The African Policy of the Liberian Settlers, 1841-1932" (1968); Raymond Buell's *Native Problem in Africa* (1928); Joseph Guannu's elementary texts on Liberian history before and after 1857 (1977 and 1980); Adam Jones on the Galinhas (1983); Jo Sullivan on the Kru (1978); and Martin Ford on the Dan (1991). There are important biographies as well—Doris Banks Henries on Liberia's presidents; Hollis Lynch on Edward Wilmot Blyden; and Wilson Jeremiah Moses on Alexander Crummell.

For political systems and foreign relations, some of the serious works include Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Liberia in World Politics* (1934); Eliot Berg's "Politics, Privilege, and Progress in Liberia—A Review Article" (1970); Carl Patrick Burrowes's "The Americo-Liberian Ruling Class and Other Myths: A Critique of Political Science in the Liberian Context"; Christopher Clapham's two chapters on Liberia in edited volumes (1978 and 1989), and his *Liberia and Sierra Leone: An Essay in Comparative Politics*; Elwood Dunn's contributions to foreign policy analysis, including the Civil War; Joseph Guannu's analysis of the First Republic; Stephen Hlophe's *Class, Ethnicity, and Politics in Liberia* (1979); Abraham James's "National Integration and the Liberian Political Process, 1943-85"; Abeodu Jones's "The Struggle for Political and Cultural Unification in Liberia, 1847-1930"; Robert Kappel's *Underdevelopment and Political Rule in a Peripheral Society* (1986); George Kieh's *Dependency and the Foreign Policy of a Small Power: The Liberian Case* (1992); J. Gus Liebenow's *Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege* (1969) and *Liberia: The Quest for Democracy* (1987); Anthony Nimley's two volumes on *Government and Politics in Liberia* (1992); Amos Sawyer's *The Emergence of Autocracy in Liberia: Tragedy and Challenge*; and Ibrahim Sundiata's *Black Scandal: America and the Liberian Labor Crisis, 1929-1936* (1980).

Good surveys of the Liberian economy include George Brown's *The Economic History of Liberia* (1941); Robert Clower et al. *Growth without Development: An Economic Survey of Liberia* (1966); Russell McLaughlin, *Foreign Investment and Development in Liberia* (1966); and



F.P.M. van der Kraaij's *The Open Door Policy: An Economic History of Liberia* (1983).

The bibliography that follows has been organized under the following subject headings: General Works, Culture, Science, Social Science, History, Politics and Economics. It is not intended to be comprehensive, though it contains most of the important studies with a slant to publications between 1986 and 1999. For items that may not be listed, the reader is referred to the most recent bibliographical studies by Elwood Dunn (1995) and Werner Korte (1998), as well as the "recent publications and theses" section of the *Liberian Studies Journal*.

## General Works

(includes travel and description, general information, guides and annual reports, statistical abstracts and bibliographies)

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